



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEXICAN NATIONAL PLEADS GUILTY TO POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA MOVED FROM TEXAS TO KC

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Mexican citizen pleaded guilty in federal court today to conspiracy to distribute 50 kilograms or more of marijuana.

Manuel Arturo Pinon, 45, of Mexico, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Chief Judge Dean Whipple this afternoon to conspiracy to distribute 50 kilograms or more of marijuana from Aug. 26, 2003, to Aug. 28, 2003, in Jackson County, Mo.

Pinon was arrested on Aug. 28, 2003, after law enforcement officers were contacted by a security manager at Yellow Freight Trucking company, located at 3500 Booth, in Kansas City, Mo.

Upon contacting law enforcement officers, a Yellow Freight security officer stated that the company was holding several crates that they found to be suspicious in nature and possibly contained illegal drugs.

Law enforcement officers responded to the Yellow Freight facility and were notified that the suspicious crates were shipped to Kansas City from El Paso, Texas, via the Yellow Freight Hub in Kansas City, Graves said. A K-9 officer alerted law enforcement officers that the crates contained marijuana.

Shortly after law enforcement officers were advised of the suspicious packages, **Pinon** and another man arrived at the Yellow Freight facility to retrieve the crates. The five crates contained concrete lawn furniture and weighed between 165 and 555 pounds each, Graves said.

Later in the day, a law enforcement officer, dressed in a Yellow Freight uniform, approached **Pinon** and the other man, who then presented the officer identification to retrieve the

packages.

The two men then approached the front gate of Yellow Freight in a van to retrieve the packages. The law enforcement officer dressed in a Yellow Freight uniform advised the men that they had been approved to pick up the shipment and two of the crates were then loaded into the van.

At that time, law enforcement officers took **Pinon** and the other man into custody and received a search warrant to search the five crates containing decorative concrete pedestals. Law enforcement officers determined that each pedestal contained numerous packages of marijuana.

Pinon was originally charged in a criminal complaint filed on Aug. 29, 2003, in Kansas City. The criminal complaint was later replaced by an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Sept. 17, 2003, in Kansas City.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David DeTar Newbert. It was investigated by the Jackson County, Mo., Drug Task Force, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow